PARIS	RIYADH	ROME
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Denial of Visa to former Bangladesh Prime Minister

4169. SHRI KULDIP NAYYAR : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have refused to give visa to the former Bangladesh Prime Minister Mahdud Ahmad;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor, and

(c) for how long has the visa been denied ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) to (c) Mr. Moudud Ahmed was refused a visa in April 1997 because he had openly advocated the dismemberment of India. No visa application from Mr. Ahmad has since been received.

Time Period Fixed for Issuing a Passport

4170. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any time period has been fixed for preparing passports after submitting the applications;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) steps taken for making the procedure more quick and simple ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Passports are normally issued within five weeks provided the application is accurately filled with all the required documents and the clear Police Verification Report has been received. This period is being adhered to in most of the Passport Offices. Delays are due to seasonal rise in passport applications and shortage of staff.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The simplification and streamlining of procedures for issue of

passports is an on going process. Among the measures taken to expedite processing of passport applications are : computerisation of processing procedures, provision for dispatch of passport by speed post, introduction of machine writing of passports and expediting police verification reports with the RPOs holding regular consultations with the local police authorities in their respective areas.

Modernisation of Passport Offices

†4171. SHRI GOPAL SINGH G. SOLANKI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of passport offices in the country proposed to be modernised by Government till the year 2000;

(b) the statewise details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to open new passport offices in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Government is modernising the passport offices through introduction of new measures including computerisation. Of the 28 Passport Offices, 20 have already been computerised. The remaining 8 passport offices are also to be computerised by the end of next year.

(b) A list of Passport Offices with their computerisation status is enclosed as statement. (*See* next page).

(c) The opening of Passport Offices is governed by certain criteria such as the location of existing offices, volume of applications from a particular region and the recommendation of the Standing Committee of Parliament of the Ministry of External Affairs that there should be at least 50000 applications per annum from an area where a new passport office is to be opened.

(d) At present there is no proposal under the consideration of the Government to open any new Passport Office.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.